



HKB”H Arranged for Yaakov Avinu to Receive the Berachos in Eisav’s Garments as Preparation for Times of Galus when Yisrael’s Sustenance Would Come through the Descendants of Eisav

This week we read parshas Toldos. It describes the birth of the twin brothers, Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov is the father of the nation of Yisrael, who received the Torah on Har Sinai, entitling them to life in Olam HaBa. Eisav, on the other hand, is the father of the nations of the world who refused to accept the Torah. Instead, they opted to enjoy the pleasures and pursuits of Olam HaZeh and to forego the possibility of life in Olam HaBa.

From the very moment of their conception and their coexistence in their mother’s womb, they began to quarrel and battle each other. As it is written (Bereishis 25, 22): **”ויתרוצצו—הבנים בקרבה—the boys wreaked havoc within her.** Rashi explains: **When she would pass by doorways of places of Torah-study of Shem and Eiver, Yaakov would run and kick, trying to exit (the womb); when she would pass by doorways of places of idol-worship, Eisav would kick, trying to exit.** This caused her to exclaim: **”אם כן למה זה אנכי—if so, why me?** Rivkah is bewildered and disturbed by this struggle ensuing within her. **”ותלך לדרוש את ה’—so, she went to inquire of Hashem.** According to Rashi, this means that she went to the Beis Midrash of Shem to find out what was happening.

”ויאמר ה’ לה שני גוים בבטןך ושני לאומים מומעיקך יפרדו ולאום מלאום—יאמץ ורב יעבוד צעיר—and Hashem informed her (Rashi: through Shem): “Two nations are in your womb; and two regimes from your insides will be separated; and one regime will become strong from the other regime; and the elder will serve the younger.” In other words, she was informed that the twin brothers inside her would not live together peacefully and harmoniously; they would continue to battle each other outside the womb as well for all eternity.

Their battle would be the battle between the sacred and the secular, between light and darkness, and between Yisrael and the other nations. Nevertheless, HKB”H promised Rivkah: **”ורב יעבוד צעיר”—ultimately, the younger brother, Yaakov, will prevail decisively, and the older brother, Eisav, will be subservient to him.**

The Reason Yaakov Received the Berachos in Eisav’s Garments

In this essay, we wish to focus on the events depicted later on in the parsha. We see that the situation foretold by HKB”H—**“one regime will become strong from the other regime”**—is played out in dramatic fashion. The two brothers vie for their father’s Berachos. As we know, Yaakov receives the Berachos from Yitzchak through a ruse orchestrated by his mother. As a result, a deep-rooted hatred was ingrained in the descendants of Yaakov and Eisav for the rest of time.

Let us review the pesukim that depict the origin of the dispute over the Berachos. Yitzchak, who favored Eisav, reveals to Eisav that he intends to bestow the Berachos on him (ibid. 27, 1):

”ויהי כי זקן יצחק ותכהין עיניו מראות, ויקרא את עשו בנו הגדול ויאמר אליו בני, ויאמר הנני. ויאמר הנה נא זקנתי לא ידעתי יום מותי, ועתה שא נא כליך תליך וקשתך וצא השדה וצודה לי צידה, ועשה לי מטעמים כאשר אהבתי והביאה לי ואוכלה, בעבור תברכך נפשי בטרם אמות.”

And it was when Yitzchak had grown old, his vision became poor, he summoned Eisav, his older son, and said to him, “My son.” And he responded to him, “Here I am.”

And he said, “See, now, I have aged; I know not the day of my death. Now sharpen, if you please your gear—your sword and your bow—and go out to the field and hunt game for me. Then make me delicacies such as I love and bring it to me and I will eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die.”

Further on in the narrative, we learn that Rivkah overheard this dialogue. She intervened by instructing Yaakov to prepare delicacies for Yitzchak, so that he would receive their father’s Berachos in place of Eisav. Yaakov, however, expressed reluctance (ibid. 11): **“ויאמר יעקב אל רבקה אמו, הן עשו אחי איש שער ויאנכי איש חלק, אולי ימושני אבי והייתי בעיניו כמתעתע והבאתי עלי קללה.”** **Yaakov protested to Rivkah, his mother, “But see, my brother Eisav is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will touch me, and I shall be as an impostor in his eyes; I will thus bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing.”** In other words, if my father discovers this ruse, he is likely to curse me due to his proclivity to “din.”

Rivkah responds to Yaakov (ibid. 13): **“עלי קללתך בני אך שמע בקולי—your curse will be on me, my son; only heed my voice and go fetch for me.** Nevertheless, to allay Yaakov’s concerns (ibid. 15): **“ותקח רבקה את בגדי עשו בנה הגדול החמודות אשר—Rivkah then took her older son Eisav’s coveted garments which were in her house, and clothed Yaakov, her younger son.** This ploy did indeed prevent Yitzchak from revealing Yaakov’s true identity, as it is written (ibid. 21): **“ויאמר יצחק אל יעקב גשה נא ואמושך בני האתה זה בני עשו אם לא, ויגש יעקב אל יצחק אביו וימושהו ויאמר הקול קול יעקב—והידיים ידי עשו—and Yitzchak said to Yaakov, “Come close, if you please, so I can touch you, my son; are you, indeed, my son Eisav or not?”** So, Yaakov drew close to Yitzchak his father, and he touched him and said, **“The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Eisav.”**

Thus, solely because Yaakov was clothed in Eisav’s garments did his father sense the fragrance of Gan Eden and decide to bestow the Berachos on him, as it is written (ibid. 26): **“ויאמר אליו יצחק אביו גשה נא ושקה לי בני, ויגש וישק לו וירח את ריח בגדיו ויברכהו ויאמר, ראה ריח בני כריח שדה אשר ברכו ה’, ויתן לך האלקים מטל השמים ומשמני הארץ ורוב דגן ותירוש.”** **Then his father Yitzchak said to him, “Draw close, if you please, and kiss me, my son.”** So, he drew close and kissed him; he smelled

the fragrance of his garments and blessed him; he said, **“See, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field which Havaya has blessed. And may Elokim give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth, and abundant grain and wine.”**

It should come as no surprise that the commentaries ponder Yitzchak’s motives. Why did Yitzchak intend on bestowing his Berachos on Eisav rather than on the more deserving Yaakov, who is described as (ibid. 25, 27): **“וייעקב איש תם יושב אהלים.”** In other words, the Torah attests to Yaakov’s wholesome and righteous character. Rashi explains that this also teaches us that he spent his time learning in the tents of Shem and Eiver. Hence, we will endeavor to explain why HKB”H, Who orchestrates everything that happens in the universe, arranged for Yitzchak Avinu to deliver the Berachos to Yaakov while he was clothed in Eisav’s garments.

Yaakov Avinu Clothed in Eisav’s Garments Alludes to the Periods of Galus

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing what the Yismach Yisrael (Toldos 12) presents in the name of the esteemed Rabbi Yitzchak of Vurka, zy”a. He explains why it was necessary for Yaakov Avinu to receive the Berachos while wearing Eisav’s clothes. Unfortunately, during times of galus, many Jews behave, at least externally, like Eisav. Nevertheless, in comparison to Eisav, all Jews are still more deserving of the Berachos. Thus, Yaakov clothed in Eisav’s garments alludes to Yisrael’s worthiness even in times of galus.

We can substantiate this assertion based on an exposition in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 115) related to the passuk (ibid. 27, 27): **“וירח את ריח בגדיו ויברכהו, ריח בוגדיו כגון יוסף משיתא: “He smelled the fragrance of his garments and blessed him.”** He sensed the scent of betrayal (those betraying him—“בוגדיו” rather than “בגדיו”), such as Yosef of Shita (the greatest Jewish heretic) and Yakum the man from Tzrurot. According to the Midrash, they were both extremely evil; however, they performed teshuvah toward the ends of their lives; they sacrificed their lives and suffered greatly for the sake of kiddush-Hashem. A heavenly voice announced that they were deserving of Olam HaBa. When Yitzchak Avinu was giving Yaakov the Berachos and he smelled the fragrance of Eisav’s garments, he perceived that these two Jewish

the exclusive portion of Hashem, designated to His name. This is the implication of the passuk (Shemos 19, 5): “You will be a treasure (“segulah”) to Me from among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine.” . . . In the end, He will punish the host of the high heaven on high, withdrawing their celestial powers and destroying the array of the servants. Afterwards, He will punish the kings of the earth on the earth.

Now, the explanation of the Ye’arot Devash concerning the “galus of the Shechinah” makes perfect sense. For, so long as Yisrael are in Eretz Yisrael, they are governed directly and exclusively by HKB”H. At those times, HKB”H rests His Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash, from where she provides Yisrael, His holy people, with abundant good and sustenance. The leftovers are dispersed throughout the world to the seventy ministering angels.

During periods of galus, however, when we have been exiled from our land due to our numerous sins, the situation is quite different. The seventy ministering angels then govern us, and the Shechinah provides for its children, Yisrael, via the particular ministering angel of the country in which they are located. Since the ministering angels hate and oppose the kedushah of Yisrael, they keep the main part of what is provided for themselves and leave only the leftovers for Yisrael. In conclusion, there is no greater “galus of the Shechinah” than this—that she must resort to providing holy influence and sustenance to the ministering angels of the nations of the world.

The Ministering Angels Are Aware that They Are Receiving Sustenance on Account of Yisrael

But why do the ministering angels of the nations of the world bother to give Yisrael their leftovers? Seeing as they despise Yisrael, it would seem that they would keep everything for themselves and not leave us anything. Furthermore, Rashi teaches us a basic truism regarding the nations of the world (Bereishis 33, 4): **Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: It is a known fact that Eisav hates Yaakov.** That being the case, why do they keep Yisrael in their lands and under their control?

Based on our current discussion, here is the answer. All of the seventy ministering angels know the truth. They are beholding to Yisrael, because whatever is provided to them is solely on account

of the people of Yisrael, who are living in their lands. They know that the world was created for Yisrael. Thus, if they neglect to leave the leftovers for Yisrael, they will forfeit everything that had been provided them in the merit of Yisrael. Therefore, they prefer to give Yisrael a small amount of what they receive, while they steal the vast majority for themselves.

To provide further clarification, let us refer to a teaching in the Gemara (Pesachim 87b): **“לא הגלה הקב”ה את ישראל לבין האומות—HKB”H only exiled Yisrael among the nations in order to add converts (“geirim”) to their numbers.** In Sha’ar HaPesukim (Shemos), the Arizal explains that as a consequence of the sin of Adam HaRishon, sparks of kedushah—“nitzotzei kedushah”—fell into the realm of tumah and were scattered throughout the world among the nations. Therefore, Yisrael were exiled from one foreign land to another in order to retrieve and elevate those fallen sparks back to the realm of kedushah. This is the message being conveyed by Chazal: **“כדי שיתוספו עליהם גרים”**—they are referring to the “nitzotzei kedushah” that were scattered among the nations of the world and are referred to as **“גרים”**. When Yisrael serve Hashem and learn Torah in galus, those “geirim” are retrieved from the realm of tumah and restored to the realm of kedushah.

Let us introduce another precious gem from the wonderful teachings of the Yismach Moshe, zy”a, (Terumah). He discusses why HKB”H commanded us to separate from the grain we harvest terumah to be given to a kohen and ma’aser to be given to a levi. In fact, until the terumah is set aside, it is prohibited to eat from the grain; it has the status of “tevel.” For, when a person eats, he should do so for the sake of Heaven, so that the “nitzotzei kedushah” contained in the food will be elevated.

In truth, however, everyone is not on a spiritual madreigah such that he is capable of eating “l’shem shamayim” and elevating the “nitzotzei kedushah” in his food. Therefore, HKB”H arranges for all the “nitzotzei kedushah” in the grain to enter the portion set aside for the kohen as terumah. Thus, the kohen will consume them in a state of kedushah and elevate them. Hence, before the terumah is separated, the grain has a status of “tevel,” which is prohibited to eat, because it still contains “nitzotzei kedushah.” Here is a translation of his sacred teaching:

The point is that all things possess nitzotzei kedushah; they require tikun to elevate them from the levels of inanimate objects, plants life, and animal life to the level of speaking creatures (namely human beings). Now, not every person is capable of fulfilling this divine task, to rectify (elevate the nitzotzei) by means of proper consumption. Hence, these kohanim were designated to serve him, and also the leviim to a lesser degree, as it states (Devarim 17, 9): “You shall come to the kohanim and to the leviim, etc.” Therefore, HKB”H commanded to separate terumah for the kohen; through His divine kindness, He makes sure that the essence of the spark will take this form (terumah or ma’aser). Therefore, it is referred to as “Reishis,” as we find (Amos 6, 6): “And with the choicest (“Reishis”) oils they anoint themselves.” Therefore, a severe punishment is reserved for the outsider (non-kohen) who eats it, so as to prevent the desecration of its kedushah. Therefore, it is referred to as being holy. The lower-level sparks become ma’aser, whereas the animal portions are for the kohanim.

The Yismach Moshe points out that this is the implication of the name “תרומה”—which comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to elevate.” By having the kohanim consume this portion with kedushah and taharah, they successfully elevate the sparks of kedushah in the grain to Hashem. This process allows the owners to consume the grain in their possession, since it has been properly rectified.

We can now suggest that the same applies to the sustenance that HKB”H provides the ministering angels of the world during periods of galus. They take the main portion of what HKB”H provides for themselves and leave Yisrael what appears to be scraps and leftovers. For, as we know, creation was designed so that Yisrael would elevate the “nitzotzei kedushah” concealed within the provisions of Olam HaZeh. Therefore, HKB”H arranges for all the “nitzotzei kedushah” that the ministering angels receive to enter the small, concentrated portion that Yisrael receive. When Yisrael consume that portion and use it to serve Hashem, they elevate all of the “nitzotzei kedushah.”

It is precisely for this reason that the ministering angels do not dare take all of the sustenance for themselves without leaving anything for Yisrael. For they know full-well that if

Yisrael does not elevate the “nitzotzei kedushah” from what HKB”H provided them, they, too, will not receive any sustenance from HKB”H. Therefore, in reality, it would be fitting for them to give the lion’s share of the sustenance to Yisrael, since they are only being provided sustenance on account of Yisrael, who elevate the “nitzotzei kedushah.” However, since they are rooted in tumah and are related to the forces of evil, they are not capable of doing so. Hence, they merely leave Yisrael a small, concentrated portion of the sustenance.

Rivkah Clothed Yaakov in Eisav’s Garments

We now have cause to rejoice, because we can begin to comprehend Yitzchak Avinu’s profound intent and mindset. He planned to bestow the Berachos on Eisav rather than on Yaakov, because he was anticipating the future galuyos. The Torah attests to this fact as follows. When he encounters Rivkah for the first time, it says (Bereishis 24, 63): “ויצא יצחק לשוב בשדה—Yitzchak went out to converse (meditate/pray) in the field. In other words, he went out to pray for the times of galus when the site of the Mikdash would be razed and would be rendered nothing more than a desolate field, in keeping with the passuk (Yirmiyah 26, 18): “ציון שדה תחרש—Tziyon will be plowed over like a field. Yitzchak perceived via “ruach hakodesh” that when Yisrael, the offspring of Yaakov, would be in exiles under the rule of Eisav, they would have to receive their sustenance via the seventy ministering angels who govern the seventy nations of the world. Therefore, he planned to bestow the Berachos specifically upon Eisav to ensure that Yisrael, under Eisav’s rule, would receive the sustenance befitting them.

Rivkah Imeinu, however, a chariot for the holy Shechinah, perceived the situation differently. She understood that the galuyos are associated with the “galus of the Shechinah,” analogous to (Mishlei 30, 23) “a maidservant who inherits the place of her mistress.” Because in galus, the Shechinah is extremely distressed that perforce she must provide the abundant holy sustenance designated for Yisrael to the ministering angels of the nations of the world, who are not trustworthy or reliable conservators. Instead of fulfilling their role faithfully by distributing the main allocation of divine sustenance to Yisrael, they steal it for themselves, leaving Yisrael with only the scraps and leftovers.

Therefore, with her “ruach hakodesh,” she made every effort, using all of her wiles to ensure that Yaakov would receive Yitzchak’s Berachos. She foresaw that Eisav HaRasha was not worthy of the Berachos; he would abuse them and steal the divine sustenance meant for Yisrael. Instead, she understood the importance and need to bless Yaakov and his offspring, Yisrael, so that they would receive at least a minor portion of the sustenance that Eisav and his offspring would leave for them in galus and would find a berachah in it. As it is written (Vayikra 26, 5): “ואכלתם לחמכם לשובע” —**you will eat bread to satiety**; Rashi comments: **He will eat a small amount and it will become blessed in his intestines.**

Understood in this light, we can now appreciate why HKB”H arranged for Yaakov to receive the Berachos while clothed in Eisav’s garments. It was a symbolic gesture for the future periods of galus. Even then, Yaakov’s offspring would receive the Berachos from the heavens, even when they were living under the reign of Eisav and his descendants. It is as if they are clothed in the garments of Eisav, who reigns over them externally. This also explains why it was necessary for Yitzchak to bestow the Berachos on Yaakov while thinking that he was actually Eisav. Thus, he prepared for the future reality during the periods of galus when Yaakov’s descendants would actually receive the Berachos through Eisav and his descendants.

Thus, we can comprehend to some small degree the profound significance of the Berachos that Yitzchak bestowed upon Yaakov (Bereishis 27, 28): “ויתן לך האלקים מטל השמים ומשמני”

הארץ ורוב דגן ותירוש, יעבדוך עמים וישתחוו לך לאומים, הוה גביר לאחיד” —**And may Elokim give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth, and abundant grain and wine. Peoples will serve you, and regimes will bow down to you; be a lord to your brothers and your mother’s sons will bow down to you; may those who curse you be cursed, and those who bless you be blessed.** His blessing implies that HKB”H should ensure that all the “nitzotzei kedushah” **of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth** that fell into the domain of the klipos, would end up in the small portion of divine sustenance that the nations would leave over for Yaakov and his offspring. Thus, they would be able to rectify them and elevate them back to their roots by means of Torah-study and the performance of mitzvos.

In this manner, we can explain why Yitzchak adds the following in his berachah: **“Nations will serve you, and regimes will bow down to you.”** To the outside observer, it appears as if Yaakov’s offspring are subservient and subordinate to Eisav’s offspring while in galus. After all, they steal the majority of the sustenance that is provided to them from the heavens for themselves and only leave a small portion for Yaakov’s offspring. In reality, this is a misperception. For, even in galus, **“the nations will serve you.”** For, against their will and without intending to do so, they cause the “nitzotzei kedushah” in their possession to enter the small portion of divine sustenance they allot to Yisrael.



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